



Open Flame Policy

USG Policy 4a (6.00) | Approved by the Executive Director August 2023

I. Purpose and Applicability

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and procedures by which open flame devices may be used upon The Universities at Shady Grove campus. It is the intent of this policy to reduce potential fire safety risks and outline acceptable and unacceptable uses of open flames.

II. Definitions

- A. *Open Flame device* - Any device fueled by combustible or flammable gasses, liquids, or solids, that temporarily emits a flame that is directly exposed to outside elements
- B. *Solid alcohol* - a product consisting of ordinary alcohol converted to a gel and used on a small scale as a fuel.
- C. *Sterno* - a brand of denatured solid alcohol gel sold in a can and meant to be burned directly in its can. Its primary uses are in food service for buffet heating and as a chafing fuel for heating chafing dishes.

III. Candles and Incense

- A. The use of candles and the burning of incense is strictly prohibited inside campus buildings.
 - 1. The use of these items may be permitted, when necessary for ceremonial or religious purposes, provided that satisfactory precautions are taken to address potential fire safety risks. Prior Public Safety Office approval will be required.

IV. Outdoor Recreational Fires

- A. Outdoor Recreational Fires (e.g. bonfires) are strictly prohibited.

V. Solid Alcohol (Sterno) Food Heating Devices

- A. The use of solid alcohol (Sterno) heating of food is permitted, when the following requirements are complied with:
 - 1. Sterno use is only permitted in public spaces, (i.e. public assembly space, conference spaces, meeting rooms, etc.). It is not permitted in classrooms, offices, or other non-public space.
 - 2. Only University Food Service personnel or designated vendors/contractors shall be allowed to utilize Sterno heating devices, providing they comply with this

policy. Vendors/contractors shall be provided a copy of this policy and shall ensure their employees are properly trained in the lighting and handling of Sterno and the operation of a fire extinguisher.

- B. Sterno shall be attended at all times by a member of the on-premise food service staff or the catering contractor.
- C. A 10 pound BC dry chemical extinguisher, or Type K extinguisher, shall be available within twenty five (25) feet of the serving table or tables.
- D. Use of secondary containers for Sterno, e.g. fuel holders with cover, is mandatory. Proper tools must be available for the smothering of the flame if needed, i.e. snuffer paddle, regulator or saucer.
- E. All chafing racks and beverage urns using Sterno must be placed on non-combustible table runners, mats, ceramic trays, or metal trays extending at least four inches beyond the Sterno container in each direction, to prevent accidental contact with any combustible materials.
- F. Sterno shall be placed under a food or beverage container before lighting and shall not be moved once lit. Sterno shall only be lit by means of a long-neck butane lighter or long handled match.
- G. Chafing racks or beverage urns shall not be moved or relocated while Sterno are lit.
- H. Only cloth table covers shall be used when Sterno is present. All table decorations must be flame resistant.
- I. Do not allow loose clothing, hair, napkins, tablecloths, and other combustible materials near the flame. Combustible material such as plates, napkins, plastic utensils, cups and similar products shall be separated by a minimum of two feet from Sterno.
- J. Sterno must be immediately extinguished when the event ends or when the food tray is empty or no longer in use, whichever occurs first. Avoid direct contact with Sterno canisters until they have completely cooled.
- K. Canisters that are completely empty and cooled, with no flammable residue, may be disposed of in regular trash or recycled following USG procedures.

VI. Exemptions

A. This policy is not intended to restrict the use of open flame devices in the following settings:

1. Open flames used in laboratory settings (i.e. Bunsen burners) for experiments and research, strictly under a professor or lab manager's supervision.
2. Hot Work activities such as welding, soldering, cutting, and brazing, etc. performed and managed as a Facilities Management activity.

VII. Revision History

Date	Description	Revised By
06/2023	Initial Policy Creation	Michael Wahl